



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

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For Immediate Release

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Huntley Meadows Celebrates Champion Trees And Land Transfer

The Friends of Huntley Meadows, the Friends of Historic Huntley and local officials will gather at Huntley Meadows Park in Alexandria to celebrate the transfer of the last piece of land associated with a thwarted mid-70's effort to build a road through the northern edge of this 1,425 acre wetlands park. The celebration will be held on Wednesday, May 16, 2007 at 10 a.m. near the park's Visitor's Center. The rain date is May 18, 2007.

"This is a chance for us to put to rest the notion of a road cutting through this beloved park," said Park Authority Board Member Harrison A. Glasgow. Glasgow also serves on the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park Board of Directors and added, "Next week we will celebrate preservation of a beautiful natural treasure and also commemorate two champion trees that were saved by this effort."

At its meeting on January 8, 2007, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted to transfer segments of Lockheed Blvd to the Fairfax County Park Authority. This transfer ends the multi-year chronicle of the Lockheed Connector. The Lockheed Connector was a planned road connecting South Van Dorn Street with Lockheed Blvd, and then Richmond Highway. The route of this proposed road was through the northern portion of Huntley Meadows Park. Through persistent efforts of citizens who opposed this proposal, the idea was finally abandoned.

The two trees are county champion swamp chestnut oaks. They are estimated to be 200 years old and were planted when George Mason IV owned this property. They have stood witness to the growth and development of Fairfax County. Had the road been completed, these trees would have been destroyed. In 2003, the park received an Urban Forestry grant from the Virginia Department of Forestry to prune, inspect and care for these trees. Arborists assisting with this grant determined that the trees are in excellent shape and should live for another 100 years.

The ceremony will feature the ceremonial transfer of the land as well as a musical performance by children from the Frog Pond Learning Center. The children are students at the school located adjacent to the park. They have a long-standing friendship with these trees, naming one of them "Grandmother Oak." They frequently sit under this tree at story time. Light refreshments will be served.

For more information about this event please contact Huntley Meadows Park at 703-768-2525 or the Public Information Office at 703-324-8702.

Directions: Huntley Meadows may be reached by taking Beltway Exit 177A which is Richmond Highway or Route 1 south for three and a half miles to a right on Lockheed Boulevard. The park entrance is approximately three blocks down on the left at Harrison Lane. Please follow signs for parking and the ceremony.

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